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The Temple-Swift comet (1869 III, 1880 IV, 1891 V) was due to pass perihelion on June 4th of the present year, but owing to the unfavorable situation of the Earth, the comet was always in the twilight, and being on the opposite side of the Sun from the Earth, its brightness was small, and hence was not found. Its next return should be more favorable. C. D. P.

MT. HAMILTON, November 20, 1897.

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SPECTRUM OF A METEOR.

In Harvard College Observatory *Circular* No. 20, dated November 8, 1897, Professor E. C. PICKERING states that the spectrum of a meteor has been photographed for the first time.

At about 11 P.M. on June 18, 1897, when the eight-inch BACHE telescope (provided with a large objective prism) at Arequipa, Peru, was directed towards the constellation *Telescopium*, a bright meteor appeared in Right Ascension $18^h 19^m$, Declination $-47^\circ 10'$, and passed out of the field of view at Right Ascension $18^h 29^m$, Declination $-50^\circ 30'$.

Mrs. FLEMING's examination of the photographic plate shows that the spectrum consists of six bright lines, whose intensity varies in different positions of the photograph, thereby showing that the light of the meteor changed as its image passed across the plate. The intensities of these lines are estimated at 40, 100, 2, 13, 10, and 10, respectively, and their wave lengths show that the first, second, fourth, and sixth lines are probably identical with the hydrogen lines H_ϵ , H_δ , H_γ , and H_β . The fifth line is probably identical with the band which forms the distinctive feature of the spectra of stars of the third class of the fifth type, and the third line, which is barely visible, is perhaps identical with another band contained in these stars.

The H_δ line is the most intense of the four hydrogen lines in the spectrum of the meteor. This is also the case in the spectrum of α Ceti, and of many other variable stars of long period. The relations between the other hydrogen lines also indicate an important resemblance between meteors and stars having bright lines in their spectra. These results may aid in determining the conditions of temperature and pressure in these bodies.

Professor PICKERING adds that special efforts will be made to photograph meteor trails and spectra during the November meteoric shower of this year.

R. G. AITKEN.